United Nations A/67/320–E/2012/89

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 August 2012

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session
Item 25 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities for development

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2012
New York, 2-27 July 2012
Agenda item 3 (a)
Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council

Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: recommendations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides recommendations for consideration by Member States to facilitate the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of 2012 by the General Assembly of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It responds to General Assembly resolutions 62/208, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and 64/289, on system-wide coherence, and Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/7, on progress in the implementation of resolution 62/208.

It is a companion report to the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/67/93-E/2012/79), which provided an in-depth analysis of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208. It also takes into account the views and comments of Member States, as expressed during the segment on operational activities of the substantive session of 2012 of the Economic and Social Council.

* A/67/150.

12-46785 (E) 051012

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The global development cooperation landscape has changed dramatically since the last comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly in 2007. Those changes in the broader environment of global development cooperation have multiple implications for the United Nations development system. The upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review provides an important opportunity for Member States and United Nations entities to discuss and respond to these challenges and opportunities, with a view to enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system.

The recommendations contained in the present report aim to contribute to that process, both in the short and medium terms, but also by proposing a forward-looking reflection on the longer-term vision and direction for United Nations operational activities for development.

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	The changing development landscape: what does it mean for the United Nations system?	7
III.	Funding of operational activities for development	8
IV.	Enhancing the functioning of the United Nations development system	11
	A. United Nations Resident Coordinator system	11
	B. United Nations Development Assistance Framework	15
	C. Simplification and harmonization of business operations	17
	D. Transition countries: the challenge of coordination and coherence	19
	E. "Delivering as one"	20
V.	Progress in enhancing development effectiveness	22
	A. Capacity-building and development	22
	B. Gender equality and women's empowerment	24
	C. South-South cooperation	26
	D. Regional coordination	27
	E. Results-based management and planning	28
	F. Evaluation	30
VI.	Quadrennial comprehensive policy review follow-up and monitoring	32

I. Introduction

1. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review, the Secretary-General submitted a report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/67/93-E/2012/79) for the consideration of Member States at the substantive session of 2012 of the Economic and Social Council.[1]

Other related reports

The Secretary-General submitted a report on funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its 2012 substantive session (A/67/94-E/2012/80). A second report on funding will be submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly in September.

In response to General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, the Secretary-General will submit during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly a report (A/66/852) on a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

The reports on funding and system-wide evaluation should be read in conjunction with the present report.

2. The report contained an in-depth analysis of the implementation of resolution 62/208 based on extensive substantive preparations by the Secretariat and the United Nations development system, with the active engagement of Member States through a series of formal and informal consultations. It should be read as a companion report to the present report.

3. The present report provides recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly, as requested in resolution 62/208. These recommendations are aimed at further enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system.

4. The report takes into account the views and comments of Member States as expressed during the operational activities segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council held from 13 to 17 July 2012. It follows the structure of the earlier companion report of the Secretary-General, with recommendations focusing, in particular, on the areas of the funding, functioning and development effectiveness of the United Nations development system.[2] Considering the extensive evidence base which underpinned the analysis and findings of the companion report,

[1] The reports of the Secretary-General on funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/67/94-E/2012/80) and on a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/66/852) should be read in conjunction with the present report.

[2] The forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2011 will contain more detailed recommendations in this area.

the present report aims to provide the General Assembly with recommendations, which, if adopted, could significantly enhance the system-wide coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system, particularly at the country level.

5. Strengthening the coherence of the United Nations development system is an underlying theme of the recommendations contained in this report. System-wide coherence means responding to country needs and priorities and the internationally agreed development goals in a more coordinated, effective, efficient and responsive manner. It should ensure that the United Nations system as a whole contributes more effectively to development in programme countries than the sum of its individual parts. It entails drawing on the capacities of all organizations and exploring and capitalizing on opportunities for synergies and complementarities in the work of United Nations entities, with a view to achieving greater development impact. Over the past 60 years, Member States have consistently pointed to this challenge and attempted to address it.

6. The global development cooperation landscape has changed dramatically since the last comprehensive policy review by the General Assembly, in 2007, as discussed in the companion report. These changes in the broader environment of global development cooperation have multiple implications for the United Nations development system.

The diversity of development needs of programme countries is growing

7. Since 2000, when the Millennium Declaration was adopted, there has been strong economic growth in many parts of the world, lifting millions of people out of poverty. However, progress in human development has been uneven, leaving many behind and creating greater inequalities. The global food, fuel, financial and economic crises of the years between 2007 and 2010 have also highlighted the fragility of global food supply systems and commodity markets, the volatility of financial markets and major weaknesses in the institutions of global governance.

8. With few exceptions, income and wealth inequalities within and among countries have been increasing. Inequalities in access to land and other productive assets, as well as in social outcomes and access to services, remain widespread. Nearly 1 billion people are undernourished and more than 200 million people are unemployed. While many developing countries did see poverty decline in the period between 1990 and 2008, in absolute terms the reduction was overwhelmingly concentrated in a few big developing countries. In spite of decreasing rates of population in sub-Saharan Africa, the absolute number of poor people increased in the region during this period.

9. In 1990, 90 per cent of the poorest people lived in low-income countries, but today it is estimated that some 75 per cent of this group live in middle-income countries. However, by 2025, it is predicted that the locus of poverty will be overwhelmingly in low-income African States. By that time, it is estimated that over 80 per cent of the world's poor will live in Africa, compared with some 50 per cent today. These shifts demonstrate the transitory phenomenon of global poverty.

10. The past decade has also witnessed a major increase in the number of countries in crisis and transition situations, requiring a combination of humanitarian

assistance, peacebuilding and development-related support. The world's poor are increasi v concentrated in countries in such situations.

11. Despite many development challenges, the past decade has also seen significant deepening and strengthening of economic cooperation among developing countries, including through intensified regional cooperation and integration efforts. Some developing countries, for example, have shifted from being recipients of development cooperation support to being providers of such support.

12. The changes set out above underscore the need for the engagement strategy of the United Nations development system in programme countries to be flexible, responsive and adapted to each country's context.

The sustainable development paradigm requires an integrated approach

13. The pursuit of sustainable development has become a high priority for all countries. Responding effectively to the challenge of integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development will require a unified strategic approach to United Nations operational activities for development and greater clarity as to the roles of different entities. Strategic choices will have to be made and institutional fragmentation will have to be addressed. A tighter fit between the normative and operational arms of the United Nations system will be required in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. A stronger focus on gender equality and women's empowerment must also be at the heart of the approach to promoting sustainable development.

14. The manner in which Member States approach the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the design of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 will set the future direction of operational activities for development. The sustainable development framework, if adopted strategically, could therefore go a long way to fostering greater integration of the work of the United Nations development system.

The United Nations development system needs to respond to the new demands

15. The global context therefore poses a variety of challenges and opportunities for development cooperation. The United Nations development system is challenged to meet the growing demands of programme countries for more varied assistance and is faced with higher expectations by all Member States for results, often without adequate resources.

16. Throughout its more than 60-year history, the United Nations development system has regularly demonstrated the capacity to reinvent itself in response to emerging challenges and opportunities in the broader development cooperation environment. The Organization needs to maintain and build on this ability to adapt to change.

17. The findings of the substantive preparations for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the lessons learned from the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as one" initiative suggest that further progress in enhancing the coherence, coordination and efficiency of the United Nations development system at the country level may not be realistic without significant changes at Headquarters.

18. This report argues that such changes should particularly aim at enabling the United Nations to make a strategic shift towards achieving programmatic and operational interoperability across entities. The Organization should be able to work seamlessly across the vertical and horizontal dimensions of programming and business operations, including with regard to results reporting and accountability. This report therefore recommends simplification and harmonization of programming instruments and processes such as programme documents, workplans, results-based management and reporting and evaluation. It also recommends harmonization of rules, regulations, policies and procedures in the functional areas of finance, human resources management, procurement, information and communications technology and other appropriate core services, as well as attaining interoperability or harmonization of the enterprise resource planning systems of funds and programmes.

Building on the unique strengths of the Organization

19. The breadth and depth of technical capacity that exists within the United Nations development system and the mandates that emanate from international agreements and normative frameworks constitute the major advantages of the system in the global development cooperation arena. A strategy based on exploiting synergy will reinforce those advantages so that the United Nations system as a whole contributes more effectively to development in programme countries than the sum of its individual parts. This will include the contributions of funds and programmes, the specialized agencies, the Secretariat and other non-resident agencies.

20. Through its universal presence in developing countries, the Organization is also well placed to turn South-South and triangular cooperation into a regular programming modality in programme countries.

21. In the area of business operations, the sheer size and scope of the work of the United Nations around the world offer tremendous potential for achieving economies of scale. However, progress in this area depends heavily on the ability of the United Nations development system to achieve efficiency improvements, as well as the interoperability of business systems, policies and procedures across entities. The report makes a number of recommendations in this regard, including proposing greater emphasis on delivering business services at the global and regional level through intra-agency rationalization, increased use of national systems in the implementation of programmes and projects based on thorough capacity assessment processes and the development of a standardized system of cost control in order to arrive at a shared solution for measuring, monitoring and reporting on all cost categories.

22. The upcoming quadrennial review provides an important opportunity for Member States and United Nations entities to revitalize the work of the United Nations for development in programme countries. The recommendations contained in the present report aim to contribute to that process in both the short and medium terms, and by initiating a forward-looking reflection on the longer-term vision and direction for United Nations operational activities for development.

II. The changing development landscape: what does it mean for the United Nations system?

> *"The currents of change are transforming our human and physical geography. Demographic transformation, the emergence of new centres of economic dynamism, accelerating inequality within and across nations, challenges to the existing social contract by a disillusioned, mobilized citizenry, technological and organizational transformation linking people directly as never before and climate change are all placing the foundations of our world and our global system under unprecedented stress. They are driving not just incremental but exponential change. They are deeply interconnected and increasingly complex."*
>
> The Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda, 25 January 2012

23. The development landscape is changing and so must development cooperation. As discussed in some detail in the companion report of the Secretary-General, four features particularly characterize these changes in the broader environment of development cooperation: (a) the emergence of new centres of economic dynamism; (b) the changing nature of global development challenges; (c) the transforming relationship between States, markets and individuals; and (d) the growth of new institutional actors engaged in development cooperation, including civil society, the private sector, research and academic communities and foundations.

24. In the companion report, it was argued that the changing development landscape presents an important opportunity for enhancing the functioning of the United Nations development system and the effectiveness and impact of its operational activities for development. The present report makes a number of short- and medium-term recommendations towards that objective. In addition, the report contains recommendations that the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle could serve as an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders, including civil society and non-governmental organizations, to engage in a transparent and inclusive dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system in the global development cooperation environment.

25. This strategic reflection exercise could focus on the implications for the United Nations development system of the changes described above in the broader development cooperation environment, particularly with regard to issues such as functions, funding practices, capacity, partnership approaches, organizational arrangements and governance. An important objective of such a reflection exercise would be to further define the value proposition of operational activities for development of the United Nations in the emerging global development cooperation environment, particularly in the context of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Recommendation

26. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Recognize the significant changes taking place in the broader environment for global development cooperation and their important implications for the United Nations development system;**

(b) **Recognize the vital role and comparative advantage of the United Nations development system in accelerating progress on the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, addressing inequality and supporting the most vulnerable and advancing the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development;**

(c) **Recognize the unique role and comparative advantage of the United Nations system in promoting the values, principles, norms and standards of the Charter of the United Nations to all Member States and in supporting Member States, at their request, to integrate these international norms into national policies;**

(d) **Encourage the United Nations development system to scale up its capacity to engage in innovative partnerships with new and emerging stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and foundations, and intensify collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank and the regional development banks;**

(e) **Take note of and welcome the proposals of the Secretary-General and consider engaging in a transparent and inclusive dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system in the rapidly changing development cooperation environment.**

III. Funding of operational activities for development*

27. In the period from 1995 to 2010, overall trends were positive for both development- and humanitarian assistance-related activities. In this 15-year period, funding for development-related activities grew by 131 per cent, humanitarian assistance-related activities by 108 per cent and non-core development-related contributions by 350 per cent, all in real terms.

28. Overall, contributions to United Nations operational activities for development grew at a faster rate during this 15-year period than total official development assistance (ODA), as reported by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC). However, almost all of that growth was in the form of non-core resources, resulting in the core ratio for operational activities for development declining from 53 per cent in 1995 to 26 per cent in 2010.

29. More recently, between 2008 and 2011 total contributions for United Nations operational activities for development experienced an annual average real decline of 1 per cent. In 2011, for example, total, core and non-core contributions for development-related activities are estimated to have declined by 7, 3 and 9 per cent respectively.[3]

30. Several policy objectives, as reflected in General Assembly resolutions 62/208 and 64/289, have not yet been achieved. These objectives include increasing the share of core funding of total resource flows to the United Nations development system; minimizing or eliminating the use of core resources for subsidizing the

* For a detailed analysis of the funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2010, please refer to the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/94-E/2012/80).

[3] See Department for Economic and Social Affairs, funding update No. 3, July 2012.

programme support and management costs of non-core funding; launching discussions at the level of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes on the issue of "critical mass" of core resources; promoting balanced burden-sharing of core funding among OECD/DAC donors; and improving the predictability of overall resource flows.

Recommendation

31. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Stress that core resources, because of their untied nature, continue to be the bedrock of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to reaffirm the importance of adequate, stable and predictable core resources for enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations operational activities for development;**

(b) **Note with concern the declining trend in total contributions to the United Nations development system in the period from 2008 to 2011, as well as the ever-growing imbalance between unrestricted core and highly fragmented, restricted non-core funding for operational activities for development and the manner in which such an imbalance may distort overall programme priorities, which flow from the established mandates and priorities of the respective United Nations entities;**

(c) **Request the President of the Assembly to organize in the first half of 2014 a high-level policy dialogue on the funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system within the broader context of the upcoming intergovernmental discussions on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. In this connection, the General Assembly may wish to:**

(i) **Request the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, as appropriate, to undertake a structured dialogue on how to finance the development results to be achieved in the new strategic planning cycle of the respective entities, with a view to addressing core/non-core imbalances, making non-core resources more predictable and less restricted, broadening the donor base and improving the adequacy and predictability of resource flows;**

(ii) **Encourage OECD/DAC member Governments and other Member States in a position to do so, to undertake consultations on how to enhance the burden-sharing of core funding for development-related activities of the United Nations system and how in particular a more equal burden-sharing can be achieved by donors shifting single donor, programme- and project-specific non-core contributions to pooled funding mechanisms or core resources. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to encourage OECD/DAC member Governments and other Member States in a position to do so, to consider the possibility of adopting an alternative funding model for providing core resources to the funds and programmes such as a "voluntary indicative scale of contributions";**

(iii) **Request the funds and programmes to propose a definition of the concept of "critical mass" of core resources to achieve priority development results and maintain core organizational capacities in the**

strategic plans of the entities and present a specific proposal in this regard to the respective Executive Boards at its sixty-eighth session;

(iv) Encourage the implementation of joint programming among members of the United Nations development system through the use of core funds;

(d) Encourage OECD/DAC member Governments and other Member States in a position to do so, to increase contributions to multi-partner trust funds and "One United Nations" funds at the global and country level, with a view to enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the support of the United Nations development system to programme countries. In this connection, the General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations development system to develop an option paper highlighting existing pooled and joint funding mechanisms applied at the global, regional and country levels, including a full review of the role played by "One United Nations" funds at the country level and the future role they might be expected to play in the funding of "One United Nations" programmes, particularly in countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach;

(e) Request that as a standard practice, all available and projected financial contributions for operational activities for development of the United Nations system at the country level be consolidated within a common budgetary framework, which would not constitute a legal constraint on the spending authority of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and use the framework to strengthen the quality of system-wide resources planning in support of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In this regard, the General Assembly may also wish to request Resident Coordinators, in support of their leadership role in resource mobilization efforts at the country level, to maintain a record of all contributions received from all funding sources for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in their respective programme countries, including those provided in non-financial terms, and provide this information in their annual reports. In this regard, the General Assembly may also wish to request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other relevant entities of the United Nations development system to provide the necessary information on contributions to the Resident Coordinators;

(f) Request the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of specialized agencies, as appropriate, to implement by the end of 2013 cost-recovery rates that ensure that non-core resources are used to pay their proportionate share of fixed indirect costs (base structure costs) of the respective entities. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the Executive Boards of funds and programmes to consider adopting harmonized differentiated cost-recovery rates that provide incentives to donors to increase core funding and/or more flexible and less earmarked use of non-core contributions at the programme or sector level;

(g) Request the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the analytical quality of system-wide reporting on funding for United Nations operational activities for development, including the coverage, timeliness, reliability, quality and comparability of system-wide data, definitions and classifications;

(h) **Request the United Nations Development Group to develop a common standard for reporting on financial data based on its principles for results reporting, adopted in 2011. Upon completion of the new standard, the relevant governing bodies of all United Nations entities could consider adopting this standard for all their agency-specific reports and a United Nations system-wide financial data warehouse should be established.**

IV. Enhancing the functioning of the United Nations development system

32. As emphasized in resolution 62/208, the primary responsibility for coordinating all types of external assistance, including United Nations support, lies with national authorities. The United Nations system has the duty to make its support to programme countries as coherent, effective and efficient as possible. The promotion and realization of system-wide coherence depends primarily on the functioning of three key coordination processes: the Resident Coordinator system (including its regional and Headquarters dimensions), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and common administrative services at the country level.

33. The efficacy of these three coordination processes in turn depends on consistent and committed leadership at Headquarters and concomitant approaches at the regional and country levels and also on the willingness of all concerned to embrace change. This section of the report provides recommendations for consideration by Member States in these three areas, as well as for the work of the United Nations system in transition countries and for the "Delivering as one" initiative.

A. United Nations Resident Coordinator system

34. The Resident Coordinator system is increasingly recognized as a key driver of system-wide coherence of operational activities for development.[4] The Resident Coordinator, as an impartial and neutral leader, is expected to spearhead efforts at the country level in exploring and capitalizing on opportunities for programmatic and operational synergy in the work of the United Nations system.

35. The ability of the Resident Coordinator to lead at the country level is based on mandates from the General Assembly, translated into guidelines developed by the United Nations Development Group on the functioning of the Resident Coordinator system and United Nations country teams, including the management and accountability system. It lacks the strength of a formal administrative decision which can turn a mandate from the General Assembly into an authoritative instruction. A Resident Coordinator must therefore cope with the challenge of

[4] There are currently 130 United Nations Resident Coordinators, who are also United Nations Development Programme Resident Representatives; 93 designated officials for security; 32 Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators; 11 Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators; 3 Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinators; 1 Executive Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator; and 2 Designated Security Coordinators.

achieving overall coherence in the programming of operational activities in an environment where entity participation is in large part voluntary, funding is not flexible and decision-making is by consensus. This increases the need for the Resident Coordinator to be a highly qualified leader with strong competencies as a consensus-builder to mobilize members of the country team around collective results and for mutual accountability within the country team to be effective.

Recommendation

36. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) Reaffirm the importance of the full implementation of several of its previous decisions:

(i) That the Resident Coordinator system, while managed by the United Nations Development Programme, is owned by the United Nations development system as a whole and that its functioning should be participatory, collegial and accountable (resolution 62/208, para. 89);

(ii) That it recognizes the central role of the Resident Coordinators in making possible the coordination of United Nations operational activities for development at the country level to improve the effectiveness of their response to the national development priorities of programme countries, including through appropriate resources and accountability (resolution 62/208, para. 90);

(iii) That there is a need to enhance the responsibility and authority of the Resident Coordinators for the planning and coordination of programmes, as well as to allow them to propose, in full consultation with Governments, to the heads of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the amendment of country programmes and major project and programmes, where required, in order to bring them into line with the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and new and emerging national priorities (first called for in resolution 50/120, para. 42);

(iv) That the country-level presence of the United Nations system should be tailored to meet the specific development needs of programme countries, as required, to implement national plans, strategies and programmes to be supported by the United Nations development system (resolution 59/250, para. 62);

(v) That the United Nations system at the country level should be structured and composed in such a way that it corresponds to ongoing and projected cooperation programmes, in line with the priorities agreed with national authorities, rather than to the institutional structure of the United Nations system (first called for in resolution 44/211, para. 15);

(vi) That the United Nations country team should review substantive activities, including draft country programmes, sectoral programmes and projects, prior to their approval by individual organizations and should exchange experience acquired, on the understanding that the result of the work of the review committee should be submitted to national

Governments for final approval through national focal points (first called for in resolution 50/120, para. 41);

(vii) That the United Nations development system should provide further financial, technical and organizational support for the Resident Coordinator system, and that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of the United Nations Development Group and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), should ensure that Resident Coordinators have the necessary resources to fulfil their role effectively (resolution 62/208, para. 92);

(viii) That coordination activities, while beneficial, represent transaction costs which are borne by both programme countries and the organizations of the United Nations system, including those of non-resident agencies, and requests the Secretary-General to report on a biennial basis to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive sessions on the functioning of the Resident Coordinator system, including costs and benefits (resolution 62/208, para. 93);

(b) Call upon all members of the United Nations Development Group to:

(i) Fully implement and monitor the implementation of the management and accountability system for the Resident Coordinator system, including strengthening the firewall and mutual accountability for results;

(ii) Use the country team code of conduct and other tools developed in conjunction with the management and accountability system, including the implementation plan of the United Nations Development Group and related support mechanisms and plans of non-resident agencies;

(iii) Advise their country representatives on the importance of their contributions to the functioning of country teams as a collective team and that that element of their mandate should be incorporated into both their job descriptions and their regular performance reviews;

(iv) Implement the previous request of the General Assembly that the Resident Coordinator contribute to the regular performance appraisals of all entity representatives who are members of the country team on their contributions to its effective and efficient functioning (resolution 50/120, para. 37 (c));

(v) Decentralize authority from Headquarters to representatives at the country level, as required, to make decisions on programmatic and financial matters related to common programming activities at the country level;

(vi) Provide adequate, cost-effective and predictable funding for coordination with due regard for the principle of fairness, which should reflect the direct involvement of each agency, based on the proportion of services used;

(vii) Strengthen the capacity of the offices of the Resident Coordinators with a view to enhancing coherence at the country level and effectiveness and stronger normative and operational linkages, including through

improved access to the expertise available in the United Nations system in response to national priorities;

(viii) **Strengthen coordination with all development partners at the country level under the leadership of the national Government in support of national development plans and priorities;**

(ix) **Enhance investment in staff development so that the United Nations development system has the right mix of capacities and skills, including for high-quality policy and programme advice, and the highest standards of leadership skills, management training and continuous learning to provide effective capacity development and other support in response to national needs and priorities. This would include enhanced emphasis on joint training across agencies;**

(x) **Find more effective ways of identifying, mobilizing and deploying the capacity, including knowledge and expertise, necessary to achieve tangible results in programme countries, including through pooling of the capacities of different entities in the same sectors and at global, regional and national levels, bearing in mind the differentiated needs of developing, least-developed, middle-income and transition countries;**

(c) **Call upon the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the exercise of his or her responsibilities for the management of the Resident Coordinator system and as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to:**

(i) **Equip the Resident Coordinator system with the necessary capacity and resources to provide cost-effective coordination, taking into account the differentiated needs for coordination and results delivery in different country contexts;**

(ii) **Ensure that funding the Resident Coordinator system will not adversely impact on the resources available for development programmes in programme countries and establish an approach to determine the threshold support necessary for effective coordination at the country level;**

(iii) **Ensure, where possible, that cost savings as a result of joint efforts and coordination will accrue to development programmes;**

(iv) **Continue, where cost-effective, to appoint UNDP Country Directors to run core UNDP activities, including fund-raising, so as to ensure that Resident Coordinators are fully available for their system-wide tasks;**

(v) **Continue to strengthen the selection, training and appraisal processes for Resident Coordinators to bring in and develop high-calibre leaders, working on behalf of and reflecting the full spectrum of the United Nations system, including the non-resident agencies;**

(vi) **Consider enhancing the role of the Resident Coordinator by adjusting his or her functions and other relevant guidelines to include the following:**

i. **To recommend to the Government, after consultation with the country team and relevant non-resident agencies, as appropriate, amendments to the Development Assistance Framework, or its action plan, if it is determined that some activities are no longer aligned with the broader strategy of the United Nations in response to the national priorities for the country concerned;**

ii. **To recommend to the Government, after consultation with the country team and relevant non-resident agencies, as appropriate, which United Nations entities should participate in the Development Assistance Framework or other common programming processes, in order to ensure a coordinated and more fully responsive support for the specific development needs and priorities of the country and its expectations for the United Nations system;**

(vii) **Commission an independent review of the joint office model experience to assess its overall cost-effectiveness and efficiency in achieving results and examine possibilities for its broader application and report on this review to the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes during 2014;**

(viii) **Ensure that the annual reports of the Resident Coordinators are accessible and made available in a timely manner to members of the United Nations development system, including to the extent possible reports on measurable benefits and the results of coordination;**

(ix) **Make available to the United Nations Development Group a synthesis of the annual reports of the Resident Coordinators during the operational activities segment of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council;**

(x) **Request the United Nations Development Group to develop a set of indicators to regularly assess and report on progress in furthering programme and operational coordination at the country level, in order to inform annual reporting to the Economic and Social Council on the functioning of the Resident Coordinator system.**

B. United Nations Development Assistance Framework

37. In introducing the package of reforms in 1997 to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, the Secretary-General stressed the interlinkages between peace and security, poverty reduction and sustainable development and the promotion and respect for human rights. In response to his call for a coherent vision and strategy for a unified approach towards common development goals at the country level, the common country assessment and the Development Assistance Framework were adopted as strategic planning instruments of the United Nations system.

38. Experience with the Development Assistance Framework as a strategic planning instrument has been mixed, as has its effectiveness in reducing duplication of activities and competition among entities for funding. However, according to the survey of programme countries, Governments value it as a mechanism for fostering coherence within the United Nations development system. They also point out that

the coherence promoted by the Framework should be carried through to the implementation stage. There is also strong demand from Governments of programme countries for simplification and harmonization of programming instruments and processes, with a view to reducing transaction costs for national Governments and other partners at the country level.

Recommendation

39. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Affirm full national ownership of all country-level strategic planning and programming documents for United Nations operational activities for development and the importance of ensuring their alignment with national plans and strategies and government planning cycles;**

(b) **Request Resident Coordinators and country teams to strengthen consultations with national Governments and relevant stakeholders, including civil society and non-governmental organizations, with a view to ensuring that the development and implementation of all United Nations planning and programming documents is fully aligned with national development needs and priorities;**

(c) **Reaffirm the value of the full participation of the specialized agencies, the Secretariat and other non-resident agencies in the Development Assistance Framework and other planning and programming processes, in accordance with their comparative advantage and technical, standard-setting, normative and other competencies and request the Resident Coordinators to proactively seek their participation;**

(d) **Request the United Nations development system to take measures to simplify the Development Assistance Framework and agency-specific programming instruments, processes and reporting requirements, including in the areas of work planning, progress reporting, results-based management and evaluation, with a view to reducing the workload of national Governments and other partners, reducing the time necessary for the preparation of relevant documents, ensuring alignment with government planning cycles, improving the focus on results and promoting a better division of labour within the United Nations system at the country level;**

(e) **Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system to apply a shared programming process that is driven by the principles of national ownership and the comparative advantage of individual entities of the United Nations system at the country level, while also serving to effectively develop national capacities through results-based joint programming, ensuring a strategic focus and alignment of programming documents to national priorities and implementing shared quality assurance, reporting systems and monitoring and evaluation;**

(f) **Request the United Nations Development Group to develop guidelines for simplifying and harmonizing programming instruments and processes at the country level, resulting in an increased ability of the United Nations system to adapt to different country-specific situations and a considerable reduction in transaction costs for national Governments and other**

partners. Such guidelines to be completed for the review of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes by the end of 2013, with a view to implementation by the end of 2014;

(g) **Request the Secretary-General to examine options for the review and approval of common country programme documents and make appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the Economic and Social Council by mid-2013 with a view to implementation by the end of 2014.**

C. Simplification and harmonization of business operations

40. Progress has been made in the harmonization and simplification of business practices across the United Nations system since 2007. Considerable initiatives have been carried out in this area by the mechanisms of the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group in a number of "Delivering as one" and other programme countries. Results include developing solutions for joint operational modalities, an increasing number of common premises and the implementation of basic common services at the country level, which serve as best practices with the potential for system-wide replication. Nonetheless, considerable challenges remain in order to achieve greater coherence within the United Nations development system, ensuring programme implementation with the support of high quality, effective and cost-efficient business operations. The existence of agency-specific regulations and rules, different enterprise resource planning systems and the predominance of vertical accountability over horizontal accountability at the country level have slowed progress towards full harmonization of business practices and reduction of transaction costs. There is an immediate requirement to address the institutional barriers to greater coherence in business operations, enabling the United Nations development system to establish high quality and cost-efficient business support services in the medium- and long-term.

Recommendation

41. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Request the United Nations Development Group, funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations to further pursue higher quality, more effective and cost-efficient support services in all programme countries by reducing the duplication of functions and transaction costs through consolidating support services at the country level, either by delegating common functions to a lead agency, or establishing a common United Nations service centre or, where feasible, outsourcing support services.**

(b) **Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations to further invest in intra-agency rationalization of business operations. The funds and programmes should present plans in this regard to their Executive Boards by the end of 2014;**

(c) Request the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group to plan and implement common support services based on a unified set of regulations and rules, policies and procedures, at the country and regional levels and at Headquarters in the functional areas of finance, human resources management, procurement, information technology management and other appropriate core services. Such a plan to be completed for review by the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and governing bodies of specialized agencies, where appropriate, by the end of 2014 with a view to implementation by 2016;

(d) Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system to ensure system-wide interoperability of enterprise resource planning systems with the objective of providing an integrated platform for processing internal and external management information and supporting harmonized business processes and practices across the entire United Nations development system by 2016. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request CEB, including the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, to undertake a study to examine the feasibility of establishing interoperability among the existing enterprise resource planning systems of the funds and programmes and report to the Executive Boards by the end of 2014;

(e) Request CEB, including the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, to develop a common definition of operating costs, including direct and indirect costs, and a common and standardized system of cost control and report to the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes by the end of 2014. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to establish such a harmonized cost classification system by 2016;

(f) Request the United Nations Development Group, funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other United Nations entities to develop and conclude inter-agency framework agreements regulating the mutual validity of agreements between United Nations entities and third parties at the country level and delegating the authority to country teams to establish and manage common services and long-term agreements with third parties through standardized inter-agency agreements without further approval requirements by the end of 2013;

(g) Request the United Nations Development Group to develop and begin implementing a strategy by the end of 2013, with concrete goals and targets, to support the establishment of common premises in programme countries, with due consideration for security conditions and cost-effectiveness;

(h) Request the United Nations development system to prioritize the availability of financial and human resources to further support the effective harmonization and rationalization of business operations, including the option to develop funding mechanisms in support of innovative and sustainable business solutions supporting the further development and implementation of high-quality, effective and cost-efficient support services;

(i) **Invite the governing bodies of specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations entities to review and discuss the recommendations set out above, with a view to promoting their implementation by the respective entities;**

(j) **Call upon the United Nations Development Group to undertake a study on the feasibility of consolidating existing learning resources into a common learning platform for the United Nations development system in a cost-effective manner and submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.**

D. Transition countries: the challenge of coordination and coherence

42. Promoting internal coordination within and across agencies working in transition countries was an important priority of resolution 62/208, requesting the United Nations development system to take measures, in line with the guidance provided by Member States, that further strengthen the coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of the operational activities of the United Nations development system in countries in transition from relief to development.

43. The concept of transition has evolved in the past few years, with greater recognition that the political and security agendas need to be integrated into planning and policy-making when it comes to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and development-related activities. Planning processes also need to be flexible and more tailored to different country or area contexts. The transition country or area context also requires more emphasis on continuous joint strategic planning and risk analysis by United Nations entities and their partners.

44. A review of various studies and evaluation reports in the preparation for the companion report of the Secretary-General for the quadrennial review, as well as interviews with country team members and government officials, suggest that the strengthening of coherence in crisis and transition countries remains a work in progress. This assessment is also supported by the findings of the survey of Resident Coordinators and country team members conducted as part of the preparations for that report. The views of Governments in countries or areas with integrated missions as to whether United Nations support is fully supportive of national ownership are also generally mixed according to the survey of programme countries.[5]

45. In addition, operations in transition environments often require recognition of the role of other partners who may be in a position to work hand-in-hand with United Nations entities and bring on board much needed resources and expertise.

Recommendation

46. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Reaffirm the interlinkages between development, peace and human rights and their mutually reinforcing nature in the overarching framework of the work of the United Nations;**

(b) **Call for significant strengthening of strategic, programmatic and operational cooperation and coordination between the development,**

[5] Ten Governments in countries or areas with integrated missions participated in the survey.

humanitarian assistance and peace-building pillars of the United Nations system in support of national efforts in transition countries;

(c) Recognize that an integrated Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator function has important benefits, facilitating linkages between United Nations humanitarian assistance and recovery and development work, providing smoother transition for United Nations development operations and helping to build resilience;

(d) Call for accelerated progress in deepening integration and interoperability between Secretariat entities and members of the United Nations development system, inter alia, through simplification and harmonization of programming instruments and processes and business practices, with a view to providing effective, efficient and responsive support to national efforts in transition countries;

(e) Call for further strengthening of the coordination role of the Resident Coordinator in countries undergoing transition. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the members of the United Nations development system to take immediate steps to fully implement the management and accountability system to enable the Resident Coordinators to effectively and efficiently coordinate operational activities for development of the United Nations system in transition countries;

(f) Request the United Nations development system to assign priority to providing adequate and sustained financial and technical support to ensure effective strategic and operational planning and coordination capacity in the offices of Resident Coordinators in countries undergoing transition;

(g) Request the United Nations development system to review and strengthen the peace and development advisory system to support Resident Coordinators and country teams in transition countries;

(h) Request members of the United Nations development system to further delegate authority in the areas of programming and allocation of resources to field representatives of United Nations entities in order to enable the respective entities to respond effectively and efficiently to national needs and priorities in transition countries;

(i) Encourage OECD/DAC member Governments to commit to the principle of shared risk in crisis and transition countries, using existing mechanisms creatively to cover the higher operational and security risks and costs associated with such contexts;

(j) Encourage the United Nations development system to strengthen operational partnerships with other multilateral organizations and other partners working in transition countries, particularly the World Bank.

E. "Delivering as one"

47. The independent evaluation of lessons learned from "Delivering as one" was conducted in 2011 and 2012, in accordance with the mandate provided by resolution 62/208 and based on modalities endorsed by resolution 64/289 on system-wide

coherence. The main conclusions and lessons learned from the independent evaluation are set out below.

48. The voluntary adoption of the "Delivering as one" approach by national Governments of pilot countries has greatly enhanced their ownership and leadership of the reform process and United Nations programmes. "Delivering as one" also allows the United Nations system to better address cross-cutting issues (for example, human rights and gender equality) with the added benefit of enhancing its ability to support Governments on other multidisciplinary development issues (e.g. poverty, child mortality or local governance).

49. While other United Nations reform initiatives have focused on specific aspects of programming, funding, management and accountability, the uniqueness of "Delivering as one" is that it considers all these aspects in an interlinked package. The package also comprises a variety of other innovations which are potentially useful for the United Nations development system as a whole; for example, new ways of dealing with joint programmes and joint programming, shared monitoring systems, local joint procurement, common communication strategies and the codes of conduct for the country teams.

50. The "One programme", "One leader", "One voice" and "One budget" approaches have not led to one line of accountability and this has implications for the measurement of performance. Given the fact that each United Nations organization has its own governance structure, mandate and culture, individual agencies remain the primary unit of account for performance and management. Vertical accountability prevails over horizontal accountability.

51. Resident Coordinators and country team members in pilot countries are approaching the limits of what can be achieved in terms of reducing transaction costs and increased efficiency through country-level innovations covered by the "One office" dimension. Since many high-level systemic elements have not been changed, the marginal cost of enhanced coordination at country level is increasing. On more than one occasion, local solutions have presented management challenges at the corporate level. In many areas, only organizational change can make country-level coordination easier and less costly.

52. The "One fund" is a valuable addition to traditional funding modalities and offers the potential to address a broader range of the needs and priorities of programme countries than do traditional core and non-core funding, which are limited to those addressed by the agencies mobilizing the resources. There are, however, concerns about the sustainability of these funding instruments.

53. Recommendations and lessons learned from the independent evaluation of "Delivering as one" have been taken into consideration in other sections of this report.

Recommendation

54. Concerning the "Delivering as one" approach, the General Assembly may wish to:

(a) Take note of the outcome of the independent evaluation of lessons learned from "Delivering as one" presented in the note by the Secretary-General (A/66/859);

(b) **Acknowledge the experience of the voluntary adoption of the "Delivering as one" pilot approach by a number of programme countries as an important initiative for enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system, as a real-world testing ground to strengthen national ownership and leadership in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system and for achieving strategic results, especially on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS, as well as in broad sectoral and thematic areas, such as economic development and the environment;**

(c) **Emphasize that the principle of voluntary adoption of the "Delivering as one" and "No one size fits all" approach should be maintained, so that individual programme countries can tailor their approach to partnership with the United Nations system in a way that most suits their national needs, priorities and planning modalities, as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, other internationally agreed development goals and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015;**

(d) **Encourage the United Nations system to support programme countries that wish to adopt the "Delivering as one" approach with an integrated package of support comprising guidance on programming, monitoring and evaluation and reporting; innovative funding mechanisms, drawing on the lessons from the expanded funding window and the "One fund" mechanisms; support to the Resident Coordinator system in line with the management and accountability system; and simplification and harmonization of business practices.**

V. Progress in enhancing development effectiveness

55. The central purpose of development cooperation of the United Nations system is to contribute to the development of national capacities in programme countries. This means that the development operations of the United Nations system must be responsive to national development plans, policies and priorities, which constitute the only viable frame of reference for programming operational activities for development.

56. This section of the report provides recommendations for consideration by Member States in the areas of capacity-building and development, gender equality and women's empowerment, South-South cooperation, the regional dimension of development, results-based management and planning and evaluation.

A. Capacity-building and development

57. In successive resolutions on the comprehensive policy review, the General Assembly has consistently underlined the importance of strengthening national capacities and, as part of that effort, providing coherent United Nations system support and making optimal use of existing national capacities and systems.

58. Nearly all Governments in a survey of programme countries were inclined to agree with the statement that the United Nations has been effective in developing national capacities. Nonetheless, capacity development was one of the three areas

most frequently mentioned by programme countries where they felt that the United Nations might be more effective and where it should be paying more attention. The findings of the survey suggest that the achievements of the United Nations development system in the area of capacity development do not seem to be reflected in the usage of national systems, with only about 10 per cent of Governments agreeing that United Nations entities use national procurement, financial, monitoring and reporting systems, or national evaluation capacities "as much as possible".

59. The United Nations development system should also be able to respond to a growing demand from the Governments of programme countries for specialized policy advisory support from United Nations entities to deal with emerging global challenges. This includes enabling countries to take full advantage of the normative, standard-setting, analytical and operational mandates and capacities of the United Nations development system, as well as the humanitarian dimension.

Recommendation

60. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Reaffirm the importance of national ownership and leadership of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;**

(b) **Call upon the funds and programmes and encourage specialized agencies of the United Nations system to practice greater transparency at all levels to facilitate mutual accountability as the basis for successful partnerships;**

(c) **Call upon the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system engaged in operational activities for development to strengthen their focus on developing national capacities for development planning, implementation and evaluation, with an emphasis on the effective integration of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development. In this regard, countries should have full access to the mandates and resources of the United Nations development system, including the knowledge base and expertise of all resident and non-resident agencies;**

(d) **Recognize that the achievement of several internationally agreed development goals are of a transboundary nature and can best be addressed through global, interregional, regional and subregional cooperation, including South-South cooperation. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to encourage the United Nations development system to take further measures to promote South-South and triangular cooperation in regular programme implementation at the country level, drawing on the vast experience of middle-income countries and other programme countries in the sharing of knowledge, technology transfer and fostering regional integration;**

(e) **Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to further enhance institutional capacity development by strengthening and expanding the links between individual United Nations entities and line ministries, while preserving the balance between inclusivity and greater coherence of the United Nations system at the country level;**

(f) Encourage the United Nations development system to further promote, develop and support knowledge management systems so that recipient countries can avail themselves of knowledge and expertise that is not easily accessible at the country level, including resources at Headquarters and at the regional level and from the Secretariat and other non-resident agencies;

(g) Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to expand the use of national systems and, in consultation with national Governments, develop and implement strategies to invest in national systems with a view to their future adoption by the United Nations development system. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations entities to develop a strategy by the end of 2014 for the utilization of national systems, based upon targeted assessments of the capacity of national systems in relevant areas, including programme planning, financial management, procurement, statistics, monitoring, evaluation and audit;

(h) Request the United Nations Development Group to design and implement standardized capacity assessments for each relevant area (procurement, statistics, financial management, reporting, evaluation and audit) by the end of 2014, taking into account the practices of other development partners, to arrive at informed decisions on the capacity of national systems; to identify the need for further capacity development, where required; and to develop targeted timeframes for fully using national systems in each programme country, taking into account the particular situation and requirements of countries in conflict and transition. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system, where capacity assessments indicate acceptable systems, to achieve full utilization of national systems for programme implementation in all programme countries by the end of 2016 and to report back biennially on the progress achieved.

B. Gender equality and women's empowerment

61. Gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system has increased in large measure since the triennial comprehensive policy review in 2007.[6] However, as discussed in the companion report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial review, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming continues to be hampered by several factors, such as lack of leadership commitment, weak accountability for results, limited staff capacity, limited knowledge, insufficient financial resources and undeveloped reporting systems. A recent review of the use of the gender scorecard also indicates that no country team is meeting the average target for gender mainstreaming, with the strongest performance in the area of planning and programming, but limited progress when it comes to gender budgeting, accountability, monitoring and evaluation and partnerships.

[6] Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels, but it is also recognized that gender units or focal points are still needed and that gender mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted women-specific policies and programmes or positive legislation.

Recommendation

62. The General Assembly may wish to:

(a) Request members of the United Nations development system to substantially increase the investment in and focus on gender equality and the outcomes and outputs relating to the empowerment of women in programmes in United Nations development frameworks, such as the Development Assistance Framework, including through the full and effective implementation of the Development Assistance Framework guidelines on gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(b) Call for the full implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and women's empowerment as an accountability framework to be applied throughout the United Nations system. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to recognize the key role played by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in promoting accountability for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

(c) Call upon the United Nations development system to acquire sufficient technical expertise for gender mainstreaming in programme planning and implementation to ensure that gender dimensions are systematically addressed and, in this regard, to draw on the gender expertise available in the United Nations system, including in UN-Women, to assist in the preparation of the Development Assistance Framework and other development programming frameworks;

(d) Call upon United Nations entities to ensure that the various existing accountability mechanisms provide for more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender equality results and on the tracking of gender-related resource allocation and expenditure, including through the promotion of the use, where appropriate, of gender markers, and by encouraging the use by United Nations country teams of gender accountability mechanisms to assist and improve their performance at the country level;

(e) Encourage the United Nations development system to collect, analyse and disseminate comparable data, disaggregated by gender and age, in a regular and systematic manner to guide country programming, to support the preparation of Organization-wide and country-level documents, such as the strategic, programmatic and results-based frameworks, and to continue to refine their tools for measuring progress and impact;

(f) Request the United Nations development system to expand and strengthen the use of the country team performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women (scorecard) as a mandatory planning and reporting tool for all country teams, with an annual review of scorecard recommendations so that they are systematically included in country team workplans;

(g) Request Resident Coordinators to provide in their annual reports adequate and precise information on progress in gender mainstreaming and

gender-specific programming, including the results demonstrated by the scorecard, as well as progress made at national level in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in accordance with national development plans, policies and priorities;

(h) Encourage the United Nations development system to institute greater accountability for gender equality in evaluations conducted by country teams, in particular, ensuring the application of the norms and standards related to gender equality of the United Nations Evaluation Group, as well as guidance on the integration of a gender perspective in evaluations.

C. South-South cooperation

63. In 2008, the Secretary-General laid out a vision of mainstream support for South-South cooperation in the corporate policy instruments and strategies of United Nations entities. The 2009 guidelines of the United Nations Development Group for the preparation of Development Assistance Frameworks and the priorities of the United Nations Development Group for 2010-2011 both included South-South and triangular cooperation as vehicles for national capacity development. At the urging of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, a related framework of operational guidelines on South-South and triangular cooperation has been adopted with a view to enhancing the mainstreaming of this approach in United Nations operational activities for development.

64. However, some global guidelines remain to be translated into concrete action at the country level. An evaluation by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2011 showed that out of 109 Development Assistance Frameworks, only 17 explicitly referred to South-South cooperation and only 5 had an outcome that was specifically related to South-South cooperation. Six out of 24 Frameworks starting in 2010 refer to South-South cooperation.

65. An important message of the companion report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial review was that the time has come for United Nations entities to transform South-South cooperation from an issue of special attention into a modality for regular, day-to-day programming within the United Nations system.

Recommendation

66. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) Reaffirm the comparative advantage of the United Nations development system as a relevant partner in facilitating and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation, due to its universal presence in programme countries and the importance of the Organization as an impartial partner in supporting the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) Request the United Nations development system to strengthen support for South-South and triangular cooperation, drawing on the considerable experience of middle-income countries and facilitating knowledge exchange, peer learning, technology transfer and regional integration as important contributions to national capacity development. In this regard, the

General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations development system to capitalize on its particular comparative advantage in this area and support programme countries through targeted capacity development of national systems, with the objective of maximizing the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation;

(c) Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation into regular country-level programming of operational activities for development and strengthen support mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including drawing upon the knowledge networks of global entities and the capacities of the United Nations regional commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group;

(d) Request the funds and programmes and encourage the specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to identify administrative rules, regulations and practices that prevent them from participating in South-South cooperation, propose solutions and report to their respective governing bodies by the end of 2013.

D. Regional coordination

67. The triennial comprehensive policy review in 2007 emphasized the need for United Nations agencies to strengthen cooperation at the regional level. The regional coordination mechanisms mandated by the Economic and Social Council and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group constitute the main instruments for United Nations coordination at the regional level. The regional coordination mechanisms focus on policy, normative and analytical work in a regional context and regional and subregional programming. The regional teams provide strategic direction, programmatic and policy advice and oversight, technical support, quality support and advice, performance management and troubleshooting to Resident Coordinators and country teams, as well as paying special attention to the Development Assistance Framework process and joint programming.

68. The linkages between the two regional support mechanisms and the Resident Coordinators and country teams at the country level remain a work in progress, as reflected in the surveys of Governments of programme countries and of Resident Coordinators and country teams. The findings of the two surveys could be seen as an indication that the Governments of programme countries and country teams feel that there is an urgent need for regional support structures to demonstrate their added value more effectively.

Recommendation

69. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) Request the United Nations regional commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group to enhance their support to Resident Coordinators and country teams through demand-driven advisory services, including with regard to the regional and subregional dimensions of

national development goals, and based on effective and efficient division of labour;

(b) **Encourage Resident Coordinators and country teams to draw more upon the work and policy expertise on normative support that exists within the United Nations regional commissions. To facilitate such collaboration, and in consultation with the regional commissions and the regional teams, the management of the Resident Coordinator system should organize, on a pilot basis, annual inductions for newly appointed Resident Coordinators at the headquarters of the regional commissions followed by a review of the added value after two years;**

(c) **Take note of the assistance provided by the regional teams to the country teams across a range of areas (including quality assurance and support to country-level programming and Development Assistance Frameworks, appraisal of Resident Coordinators and troubleshooting at country level) and request the regional teams to substantially enhance their support to Resident Coordinators and country teams in providing expertise in the area of operational support services, including the development of change management plans in connection with the implementation of common support services at the country level, facilitating guidance and business operations strategies led by Headquarters and exchange of best practices;**

(d) **Emphasize that the United Nations development system should further leverage its capacities at the regional level to enhance coherent and integrated support to countries emerging from conflict, particularly in Africa, with a view to preventing the spillover and recurrence of the conflict in the region or subregion and contributing to national reconciliation, post-conflict recovery and sustainable development;**

(e) **Stress that the coherence and effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development at the regional level could be enhanced by strengthening interaction between the regional coordination mechanisms and the regional teams;**

(f) **Request the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the regional commissions and the United Nations Development Group, to carry out a study and provide recommendations on how to provide regional support to country teams in the most effective manner;**

(g) **Request the United Nations Development Group and its regional teams, in close cooperation with the regional commissions, to develop and implement a strategy by the end of 2014 for co-location of regional and subregional offices of funds and programmes and specialized agencies, with the objective of establishing common premises of all United Nations entities at the regional and subregional level, wherever possible and where security conditions permit, by the end of 2016.**

E. Results-based management and planning

70. Since the triennial comprehensive policy review in 2007, there have been increased efforts on the part of the United Nations development system to enhance results-based management within individual agencies and at the country level,

through the Development Assistance Frameworks, as one of five programming principles. Further impetus for improving results-based management comes from demands in both programme and donor countries for the United Nations development system to demonstrate that it is achieving its objectives, that it does so efficiently and that its activities are relevant to the needs and priorities of programme countries and contribute to improved and sustainable development outcomes.

71. Analysis conducted for the preparation of the companion report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial review, as well as several other studies, have found that reporting on results within the United Nations system is not as effective as it should be. There are gaps, particularly at the country level, in the way in which results are understood by those who own and manage them; how results are used for decision-making; and communicating results to stakeholders, including national partners. Monitoring and evaluation, which is an integral part of results-based management, is also not carried out consistently across United Nations entities and resources for it are in many instances inadequate.

Recommendation

72. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Request the Secretary-General to intensify efforts in strengthening and institutionalizing results-based management in the United Nations development system, with the objective of improving development results as well as organizational effectiveness. This includes simplifying, streamlining and harmonizing results-based management systems, including performance indicators, to eliminate the burden of multiple reporting, scaling up capacity development for results-based management, especially at the country level, strengthening knowledge networks and communities of practice for results-based management and investing in developing better guidance and techniques in measuring and evaluating impact in areas that are not easily amenable to measurement;**

(b) **Request the United Nations Development Group to articulate and implement by the end of 2014 a more robust approach to development cooperation focused on results, which would streamline and improve the planning, measurement and reporting on system-wide results, e.g. using commonly accepted performance indicators as well as a common format or a "One United Nations results report" (or scorecard) at the country level and providing a standardized results-based management terminology. A "One United Nations results report" at the country level in lieu of agency-specific reporting on results, as a standard practice in most programme countries, would ensure reporting on system-wide results as well as simplification and harmonization of results reporting. To report on progress on system-wide results, the development of a common monitoring system for results should be fast-tracked and completed by the United Nations Development Group by the end of 2014. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to invite the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations entities to engage in a focused dialogue on how to balance most effectively the need for reporting on system-wide results with the current agency-specific reporting requirements;**

(c) Request the United Nations Development Group to implement fully the management and accountability system and achieve alignment between results-based management and accountability by the end of 2013. This includes finding ways to strengthen the horizontal accountability of country teams for delivering and reporting on system-wide results at the country level. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations Development Group to ensure an adequate balance between horizontal and vertical accountability for results-based management and reporting at the country level;

(d) Request the funds and programmes and encourage specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to focus on developing and sustaining a results culture in their respective organizations. This includes identifying and implementing suitable incentives for results-based management, removing current disincentives to developing a results culture, investing in developing capacities and competencies for results-based management and periodically reviewing their results-based management systems;

(e) Request the relevant mechanisms charged with responsibility for independent system-wide evaluation to conduct an independent evaluation of results-based management in the United Nations development system and make recommendations to the General Assembly. The evaluation should assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of results-based management, taking into account the changes in the global environment, in international development cooperation, in funding practices and reporting requirements affecting the funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system and international trends in results-based management. The results of the evaluation should inform efforts by the United Nations Development Group to strengthen and institutionalize results-based management in the United Nations development system and will feed into the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

F. Evaluation

73. Evaluation units in the United Nations system often possess limited staff capacity and only a few agencies, such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund, have been able to decentralize their evaluation work. The financial and human resources for most evaluation units in the United Nations system are limited to their day-to-day work and participation in system-wide, joint or multi-agency evaluations often means working without extra resources.

74. While resolution 62/208 stressed the importance of evaluating the Development Assistance Framework, a relatively small number of countries conducted full evaluations. The majority chose to conduct a mid-term review instead, considering it more useful, with a view to stimulating the implementation process and as an input to the preparations for the next Framework, while also being less costly and time-consuming.

75. In 2011, in response to resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, the Secretary-General commissioned a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development.[7]

76. This review assessed the possibilities for the United Nations to improve its independent system-wide evaluation mechanisms in order to provide system-wide evaluations, which are independent, credible and useful on priority strategic and operational questions or issues facing the United Nations system.

77. The review concluded that, while there is a demand for independent system-wide evaluation, the existing institutional framework is inadequate; there is no clear leadership or strategy for independent system-wide evaluation; coordination of such evaluations has been ad hoc and inefficient; and the usefulness of reports has been variable. The review further concluded that the politicization of independent system-wide evaluation has been an obstacle to progress, but that there is a willingness in the United Nations system to hold substantive discussions and dialogue on the subject.

Recommendation

78. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Call upon members of the United Nations development system to support strengthened national ownership and leadership of evaluation of operational activities for development at the country level. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request United Nations entities to intensify efforts to build national capacity in programme countries for evaluation of operational activities for development. Also, in this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the United Nations Evaluation Group and the United Nations Development Group to develop guidelines for further strengthening of national evaluation capacities for operational activities for development of the United Nations system;**

(b) **Call upon members of the United Nations development system to bolster institutional and organizational capacity for evaluation of operational activities for development, to adhere to the evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, to prioritize allocation of financial resources for evaluation, to increase training and skills upgrading of United Nations staff and implementing partners in results-based management and monitoring and evaluation methods, and to ensure effective utilization of evaluation results;**

(c) **Note with appreciation the findings and recommendations of the report of the independent experts on their review of the institutional framework for the system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (summarized in A/66/852) commissioned by the Secretary-General in response to General Assembly resolution 64/289. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to reaffirm**

[7] Angela Bester and Charles Lusthaus, *Independent System-wide Evaluation Mechanisms: Comprehensive Review of the Existing Institutional Framework for System-wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System Mandated in General Assembly Resolution 64/289*, final report, April 2012.

that further strengthening of system-wide evaluation within the United Nations development system should be based on utilizing and enhancing existing mechanisms;

(d) **Reaffirm the need to strengthen independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to recognize that the Joint Inspection Unit is the only entity within the United Nations system with a specific mandate for independent system-wide evaluation and encourage the Unit to vigorously continue its ongoing reform efforts;**

(e) **Consider further steps to clarify what Member States want to achieve through independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and how this can be best achieved;**

(f) **Welcome enhanced coordination and exchange of experiences among United Nations entities engaged in system-wide evaluation efforts, in particular, the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs;**

(g) **Request the United Nations Evaluation Group, in cooperation with members of the interim coordination mechanism and other United Nations evaluation entities, to develop by the end of 2013 a common policy and methodological framework for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development;**

(h) **Request the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and encourage the governing bodies of specialized agencies and other relevant United Nations entities, including the Evaluation Group, to intensify the use of the Development Assistance Framework and system-wide evaluations in lieu of agency-specific evaluations of operational activities for development, wherever possible, particularly in programme countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach.**

VI. Quadrennial comprehensive policy review follow-up and monitoring

79. Lessons learned from the preparatory process for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of 2012 underscore the importance of underpinning future analytical reporting to Member States on the quadrennial review in an effective and evidence-based monitoring system, anchored in the collection and analysis of country-level information, data and indicators. A more robust approach to annual monitoring of the implementation of the quadrennial review is particularly important since operational activities for development of the United Nations system account for nearly two thirds of all system-wide activities of the Organization. The establishment of an effective monitoring system would also reduce information asymmetry between Member States and United Nations entities and foster greater accountability for the implementation of the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, to be adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

80. The establishment of an effective monitoring system for the quadrennial review will require further strengthening of the institutional capacity in the Secretariat for policy review and system-wide statistics, analysis and reporting of funding flows for operational activities for development.

Recommendation

81. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Emphasize the importance of the Secretariat establishing an effective and evidence-based monitoring system for implementation of the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session;**

(b) **Emphasize the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Secretariat to undertake high-quality monitoring, evaluation and reporting on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, as well as the analysis of system-wide funding flows for operational activities for development, with a view to facilitating informed intergovernmental deliberations and decision-making in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;**

(c) **Request the Secretary-General to develop an evidence-based monitoring and reporting framework for implementation of the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, to be anchored in the collection of comprehensive country-level information, data and indicators, and to report on an annual basis to the Economic and Social Council on progress made in the implementation of the resolution. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish to request the Secretary-General to conduct a biennial survey of Governments of programme countries on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system as an input to the monitoring of the implementation of the resolution. In this regard, the General Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to consolidate the annual reports on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and funding in a single annual publication on operational activities for development of the United Nations system to facilitate informed intergovernmental deliberations during the operational activities segment of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council;**

(d) **Invite the Secretary-General to submit a proposal to the General Assembly in 2013 for strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat for policy review and system-wide statistics, analysis and reporting on funding flows for operational activities for development of the United Nations system, with the objective of enhancing the effectiveness of the policy guidance and oversight of United Nations operational activities for development provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.**